

Docket Item #17-A  
MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT #96-0007  
ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA

Planning Commission Meeting  
December 3, 1996

FAILURE OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION TO ACT  
BY DECEMBER 8, 1996 SHALL BE DEEMED  
APPROVAL UNDER SECTION 9.07.1 OF THE CITY  
CHARTER.

**ISSUE:** Consideration of an amendment to the Potomac West Small Area Plan Chapter of the 1992 Master Plan to change the land use designation of the subject property to allow an automobile dealership in the CDD #7/Coordinated Development District, Route 1 Properties.

**APPLICANT:** City of Alexandria  
Department of Planning and Zoning

**LOCATION:** 3800-3804 Jefferson Davis Highway

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**CITY COUNCIL ACTION, DECEMBER 14, 1996:** Approved the recommendation of the Planning Commission.

**PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION, DECEMBER 3, 1996:** On a motion by Mr. Ragland, seconded by Mr. Wagner, the Planning Commission voted to recommend approval of the request, subject to compliance with all applicable codes, ordinances and staff recommendations. The motion carried on a vote of 5 to 0, with Mr. Leibach and Mr. Dunn abstaining.

**Reason:** A majority of the Planning Commission members agreed with the staff analysis. At least one of the two abstenions was based on process grounds.

**Speakers:**

Jeff Willis, Del Ray Citizens Association, spoke in support of the proposal but expressed concern about future uses of the Mount Vernon Avenue location.

Jack Sullivan spoke against the process whereby the City initiated the amendment and requested deferral.

Ellen Pickering spoke against the process whereby the City initiated the amendment and asked the planning commission to abstain.

Harry P. Hart, representing Jack Taylor, spoke in support of the proposal.

Jack Taylor spoke in support of the proposal.

MPA 96-0007

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the following change to the Coordinated Development District Guidelines for the Route One Property:

[~~strikeout~~ indicates deleted text]

[**bold-underline** indicates new text]

Development without a special use permit

Within the designated CDD area, the RB zone regulation shall apply along Reed Avenue, RC zone regulation shall apply along Commonwealth Avenue to the depth of 100 feet and the OC regulation shall apply on the remainder of the site, provided that heights in the area along Commonwealth Avenue do not exceed 45 feet **and provided that the use of automobile and trailer rental or sales be permitted with a special use permit on the portion of the site governed by the OC zone regulations.**

**BACKGROUND**

On October 8, 1996, City Council initiated an amendment to the Potomac West Small Area Plan and a rezoning to allow automobile and trailer rental and sales on the portion of the Route One properties zoned CDD with an underlying zoning of OC/Office Commercial. The amendment was initiated at the request of Harry P. Hart, on behalf of Jack Taylor, who concurrently submitted an application for a motor vehicle dealership on a portion of the property. The proposed change is intended to facilitate Jack Taylor's Alexandria Toyota dealership's proposed relocation from 1707 Mt. Vernon Avenue to 3800-3804 Jefferson Davis Highway.

The Route One properties are located on the western side of Jefferson Davis Highway at the northern entry to the City. The major portion of the site consists of seven parcels owned by four different owners with the remainder of the site consisting of 49 frame built duplex and single family homes along Reed Avenue under multiple ownership.

With the exception of the residences along Reed Avenue, the site is either vacant or utilized for a variety of auto-oriented uses, including a Hertz facility, auto repair garages, and parking lots.

In June 1992 the Route One properties were rezoned from I-1, I-2 and RD to CDD/Coordinated Development District in conjunction with the City's comprehensive Master Plan and zoning update. The CDD zoning envisioned coordinated redevelopment for the multiple properties with a mix of office, residential and retail uses, with residential uses focussed along Commonwealth Avenue and Reed Avenue.

Although coordinated overall development is the goal of the CDD zone, the zone includes provisions for development without an overall coordinated plan in "underlying" zoning. The underlying zoning for the Route One properties permits OC/Office commercial uses, except along Commonwealth Avenue, where a depth of 100 feet has an RC/Residential High designation, and along Reed Avenue, where the designation is RB/Residential Medium.

The OC zone permits automobile service stations and motor vehicle parking and storage but not automobiles and trailer sale or rental.

The proposed master plan amendment would allow automobile sales on the OC portion of the site.

**STAFF ANALYSIS**

The goal of the 1992 master plan for the Route One properties is large scale, high quality, redevelopment in a mix of uses. The site has excellent access to I-395, Washington D.C., Crystal City and National Airport, good visibility on a major street, Route 1, and a location at the entrance to the City. The Potomac West Small Area Plan, adopted in 1992, clearly envisioned major redevelopment on the site, most likely coinciding with the redevelopment of Potomac Yard, another large development tract located across Route 1 from the site.

On October 15, 1994, City Council voted to deny a request to expand the existing Hertz auto storage and light repair facility onto a portion of the site proposed for the dealership because the expansion was not consistent with the long term land use goals for the site.

But the failure of the Route 1 properties to attract large scale mixed use development has led staff to conclude that that goal may be achieved only in the long term, if at all, and that consideration should be given to interim uses, as has been done across the street in the Potomac Yard project.

Under the current OC/Office Commercial underlying zoning, the applicant may, with a special use permit, seek approval of a large number of uses which may not be consistent with the long term goal for the area. Some of those uses include:

- Amusement enterprise
- Automobile service station
- Convenience store
- Drive through facility
- Funeral home
- Homeless shelter
- Interstate bus station
- Light automotive repair
- Research and testing laboratory
- Wholesale business

Automobile sales is not included in the OC zone, as it is in the CSL zone, which is the underlying zone of the Potomac Yard CDD across Route 1 from the subject properties.

The applicant met with staff to discuss what changes would be needed to permit auto sales on the subject site. One alternative, not requiring a master plan change would be an amendment to the zoning text to add automobile and trailers sales or rental to the list of

uses permitted in the OC zone. This approach would have had the disadvantage of changing the permitted uses in the zone all over the City, including in some areas where the use might not be appropriate. The applicant suggested changing the underlying zoning in the Route 1 properties CDD. This had the advantage of affecting only the few properties on the site, but the disadvantage of requiring a change to the master plan, a cumbersome process. Staff recommended the latter approach, and the applicant agreed to pursue it.

An automobile sales area is not necessarily consistent with the long range goal for development of the Route 1 properties, but neither are most of the uses listed above which are permitted with an SUP. Because there seems little likelihood of attracting the desired long term mixed use development in the short term, it is reasonable to consider what kinds of uses may be appropriate in the intermediate term, and automobile sales is a plausible use. It will not be incompatible with the existing uses to the north, south and west, which are all automobile uses, and is not incompatible with the proposed uses of the northern portion of Potomac Yard either in the short- and mid-term (a 667,000 sq. ft. shopping center) or in the long term (a mixture of residential and office) uses.

The use will require a special use permit, and issues related to the treatment of Route 1, and buffering along potential adjacent residential uses can and will be handled in conjunction with the special use permit process. As proposed, the amendment would only affect the portion of the site with underlying OC/Office Commercial zoning; the residentially zoned properties along Commonwealth Avenue and Reed Avenue would remain limited to residential development.

While the proposed use of the site is appropriate as a short- and mid-term use, it is possible that that use will become a permanent one at the site if the dealership is successful. It is worth noting that auto dealerships along Route 7 in Tysons Corner persist despite the demand for office development in that corridor.

Approval of the amendment will also permit the City to achieve one of its primary goals, retention of a valued business within the City, and will also have the merit of freeing up some land on Mt. Vernon Avenue for development which could stimulate business on the Avenue.

Staff recommends approval of this minor change to the master plan which is really tantamount to a minor text amendment.

STAFF: Sheldon Lynn, Director, Department of Planning and Zoning;  
Kimberley Johnson, Chief, Development; Gregory Tate,  
Urban Planner.



RESOLUTION NO. MPA-96-0007

WHEREAS, under the Provisions of Section 9.05 of the City Charter, the Planning Commission may adopt amendments to the Master Plan of the City of Alexandria and submit to the City Council such revisions in said plans as changing conditions may make necessary; and

WHEREAS, an application for amendment to the Potomac West Small Area Plan section of the 1992 Master Plan was initiated by City Council on October 8, 1996 for changes in the land use designations to the parcels within the "Route One Properties"; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Planning and Zoning has analyzed the proposed revision and presented its recommendations to the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, a duly advertised public hearing on the proposed amendment was held on December 3, 1996 with all public testimony and written comment considered; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission finds that:

1. The proposed amendment is necessary and desirable to guide and accomplish the coordinated, adjusted and harmonious development of the Potomac West Small Area Plan section of the City; and
2. The proposed amendment is generally consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the 1992 Master Plan and with the specific goals and objectives set forth in the Potomac West Small Area Plan section of the 1992 Master Plan; and
3. The proposed amendment shows the Planning Commission's long-range recommendations for the general development of the Potomac West Small Area Plan; and
4. Based on the foregoing findings and all other facts and circumstances of which the Planning Commission may properly take notice in making and adopting a master plan for the City of Alexandria, adoption of the amendment to the Potomac West Small Area Plan section of the 1992 Master Plan will, in accordance with present and probable future needs and resources, best promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the residents of the City;

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Planning Commission of the City of Alexandria that:

1. The following amendment is hereby adopted in its entirety as an amendment to the Potomac West Small Area Plan section of the 1992 Master Plan of the City of Alexandria, Virginia in accordance with Section 9.05 of the Charter of the City of Alexandria, Virginia:

Amend the CDD guidelines for development without a special use permit to read as follows:

Within the designated CDD area, the RB zone regulation shall apply along Reed Avenue, RC zone regulation shall apply along Commonwealth Avenue to the depth of 100 feet and the OC

regulation shall apply on the remainder of the site, provided that heights in the area along Commonwealth Avenue do not exceed 45 feet and provided that the use of automobile and trailer rental or sales be permitted

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2. This resolution shall be signed by the Chairman of the Planning Commission and attested by its secretary, and a true copy of this resolution forwarded and certified to the City Council.

ADOPTED the 3rd day of December, 1996.

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W. B. Hurd, Chairman

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sheldon Lynn, Secretary